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ABSTRACT

This paper explains the nature of the teacher education program at Saint Joseph's College, Rensselaer, Indiana, focusing on four distinct yet integrated components of the teacher education program. The components--education faculty; faculty from the arts, sciences, and humanities; and preK-12 classroom teachers--work collaboratively in the interdisciplinary preparation of future teachers. The paper also clarifies concepts that frame the teacher education program at Saint Joseph's College. College faculty believe that by teaching about the theory of interdisciplinary instruction, and through modeling it in practice, preservice teachers will come to understand the theory, incorporate it into their knowledge bases, and continue to develop their skills and values toward the use of this theory and practice when they are teachers. The core curriculum is an integrated, interdisciplinary, required program which extends throughout all eight semesters of undergraduate school. The college strives to prepare teachers for work with diverse students when they go out into the classroom. The program has realigned and connected the core curriculum, academic major, professional education courses, and professional laboratory experiences to enhance optimum student cognitive and moral growth. (Contains 27 references.) (SM)

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The One, Two Punch!

General Education

and

Teacher Education Curricula

at a

Small, Independent, Liberal Arts College

For All Students Including

Pre-service Teachers

by

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THE ONE, TWO PUNCH!
GENERAL EDUCATION AND TEACHER EDUCATION CURRICULA
AT A SMALL, INDEPENDENT, LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE

Introduction

Of the many and unfortunately frequent criticisms targeted at the field of Teacher Education, there have been quite a few aimed at the issue of general education for pre-service teachers. Often the argument contends that pre-service teachers, in particular, are not experiencing undergraduate education that is on par with students majoring in traditional arts or sciences. By fully integrating the Teacher Education Program with the common Core curriculum for all students, Saint Joseph's College has been able to not only provide a first-rate classic liberal arts background for all education majors, but has been able to coordinate and sequence this with professional courses. In essence, the program itself is a model of current best practices in interdisciplinary learning and thematic teaching. This curriculum is not just practical management of the general education requirements; rather it is a comprehensive and deliberate effort to provide the broadest and best intellectual foundation for all future teachers, preschool through high school. The following presents and explicates the program in detail. While perhaps not directly applicable to existing colleges of education, the Saint Joseph's College Teacher Education Program offers direct evidence to counter the most serious critics (Goodlad, 1999) of teacher preparation and more importantly, offers inspiration to other programs struggling with similar growth and development issues.

Over the past several years the education department at Saint Joseph's College has been moving towards incorporating the theory of interdisciplinary teaching and learning. The idea of interdisciplinary teaching and learning is not new, but has received attention in recent years, especially as performance-based teacher education programs move from theory into practice. The

College's nationally acclaimed (Boyer 1987, Boyer & Boyer, 1997, Gamson, 1984) general education program, also known as the Core Curriculum, is an interdisciplinary program that has been in practice for thirty years. A number of factors have given faculty of the education department the opportunity and the justification to explore and begin to implement this theory as the conceptual framework for the teacher education program at the college:

1. comments from one Board of Examiner member upon his visit to the College in 1993 reported that the Core program at Saint Joseph's College was "the most integrated approach to general education I've seen" (The Reporter, 1993).
2. a three year (1993-96) grant from the Funds for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE) to study "learning connections" between the College's various academic majors, in this case elementary education, and the Core Curriculum;
3. the continued acclaims of our nationally and internationally known Core Curriculum and its six common goals shared by the entire faculty;
4. the revised Mission Statement of the College (1997) and newly adopted Mission Statement of the Teacher Education Program (1998), both manifesting the need for all facets of the college community to embrace the notion of Christian humanism in the ethical formation (Templeton, 1999) of all undergraduate and in particular pre-service teachers into Christian professionals; and
5. the state of Indiana and NCATE moving toward teacher preparation, performance-based standards.

The purpose of this paper is to explain the nature of the teacher education program at Saint Joseph's College, Rensselaer Indiana. In particular, it will examine the four distinct yet integrated components of the teacher education program as education faculty, faculty from the

arts, sciences, and humanities, and P/K-12 classroom teachers work collaboratively in the interdisciplinary preparation of future teachers. The paper also attempts to clarify those concepts that frame the teacher education program at Saint Joseph's College.

Interdisciplinary Theory and Practice

Post, Ellis, Humphreys, and Buggey (1997) suggest new possibilities of interdisciplinary teaching and learning in the primary through middle school years. They propose the use of thematic units to teach connections among the subject disciplines while learners attempt to integrate knowledge, skills, and values. Dewey (1916) in his work Democracy and Education argued for developing a community of learners within the classroom and school to discuss ideas across subject content areas. Wood (1997) proposes that interdisciplinary instruction always begin with a central theme. Learners are to research or explore a central theme using any of the disciplines to assist their inquiry. The education department intends to provide pre-service teachers with the concept of interdisciplinary theory and practice between the academic major, professional education courses, the professional laboratory experiences (PLEs) or field experiences, and the Core Curriculum.

Gardner (1983) proposes that through his theory of multiple intelligences, aspects of interdisciplinary teaching and learning may be a natural fit. Through the interdisciplinary approach both teacher and learner excel in their dominate mode of teaching and learning, but are also given the chance or afforded the opportunity to work in those other learning modes that they might be weak in or shun altogether. The potential to involve pre-service teachers in the seven modes of intelligence through the interdisciplinary approach may be much greater in an undergraduate curriculum where learners from their first day on campus are beginning to gain an understanding of the knowledge bases, skills, dispositions, and values of the profession, while

being engaged simultaneously in their major (elementary education), their minor, the Core Curriculum, and PLEs in local schools.

Newman (1982) proposes, and postulates most ardently, that university level learners form an "integrative habit of mind" in their course of studies. He contends that with proper direction and practice undergraduate learners will see that all areas of learning are interconnected, assist one in learning more fully the cosmos and in bringing one closer to understanding the nature of one's createdness and relationship with the Creator.

Roberts and Kellough (1996) suggest that through the use of interdisciplinary learning and the use of thematic units the quality of student learning may improve. Roberts and Kellough further hypothesize that learners will need to be living on and tuned into the worldwide information superhighway which they believe will provide "an increased emphasis on determining meaning from the interrelationships found in the content areas of various fields of study and that integrated instructional experiences will equalize educational opportunities for all students and enhance multicultural pluralism" (p.iii).

Other theorists that the education faculty are examining, have provided assumptions for an integrated curriculum in order to foster and enhance learner inquiry, critical thinking, and authentic assessment. Beyer (1985) suggests that an integrated curriculum has its starting point in student inquiry. Bruner (1986) and others contend that interdisciplinary learning has its focus in schema theory. It holds that a learner has a developed mental codification of experience that includes a particular organized way of perceiving cognitively and responding to a complex situation or set of stimuli. Learners face cognitive challenges that may cause changes in his or her schema and when this occurs, one's knowledge bases or cognitive abilities may be restructured in

specific domains, thereby permitting the learner to solve a problem or focus his/her inquiry through different and various subject matter lenses.

Caine and Caine (1993) provide another window of opportunity for teachers and learners to explore the idea of interdisciplinary learning. They have examined research on how the brain works and suggest some practical applications for the classroom. They stress the need for teachers to assist learners in relating to, or connecting with, the different parts of the curriculum. Teachers must provide strategies and procedures that create and generate a sense of learning connectedness in the learners' cognitive abilities. They further suggest that teachers monitor learners as they move toward and in the arena of interdisciplinary connectedness.

Members of the teacher education program are currently engaged in analyzing and synthesizing a host of educators in the theory of intedisciplinary teaching and learning. Newman (1982) calls for an integrative habit of mind, while Beyer (1985), Bruner (1986), Caine and Caine (1993), Gardner (1983), Post (1997), Roberts (1996), and Wood (1997) each provide theory and practice in the development of interdisciplinary themes, approaches, and integrated instruction for the pre-service teacher. The education department's central theme--Teacher as Christian Professional--is highlighted in all courses and PLEs as the department attempts to model the concept of interdisciplinary teaching and learning. Included within this conceptual framework are the revised College Mission Statement (1997), the newly adopted (1998) teacher education program Mission Statement, and the six goals of the college's Core Curriculum (1978).

Core Curriculum

The nature of our interdisciplinary general education program, also known as the Core Curriculum, at the undergraduate level will be examined. It is the contention of the education faculty that by teaching about the theory of interdisciplinary instruction and through modeling it in

practice, vis-a-vis the professional education courses and Core Curriculum, that our pre-service teachers will come to understand the theory, incorporate it into their knowledge bases, and continue to develop and hone their skills and values towards the possible use of this theory and practice when they become future classroom teachers. The general education program, also called the Core Curriculum, is in its thirtieth year of operation. Some of the theoretical foundations for the interdisciplinary nature of this program are found in the ideas of Hirst (1974), Kockelmans (1979), Ladriere (1968), and Newman (1982). Each, through his own lens, offers theoretical and practical ideas on the philosophical underpinnings, design and delivery of an interdisciplinary curriculum with the goal to transform the learner and knowledge. However, it is the learner who will master and use the knowledge gained in life as well as for whatever occupation or profession one is preparing to enter.

Boyer (1987), Boyer and Boyer (1997), and Gamson (1984), have each cited the Core Curriculum at Saint Joseph's College in their research as a meaningful and well articulated liberal arts/general education program that parents and their sons and daughters should consider when making inquiries about an undergraduate institution of higher education. They argue for a broader as well as deeper approach of the undergraduate experience so that all students see that general education is just as important as the academic major be it biology, music or elementary education. Nichols (1978, 1984), and Chattin and Nichols (1996) suggest that the general education course requirements are as equally important as those course requirements in an academic major. They further support and argue for a greater collaboration and that interdisciplinary learning connections be established between the curricula of the general education program and all academic majors for greater learning among all learners, both faculty and students. The idea of the Core Curriculum as the students arch major is a significant strand in

the philosophy of the Core Curriculum at Saint Joseph's College. An additional benefit to this program is that students in the education program have genuine intellectual interaction with students and with professors from other majors. This serves not only to broaden the horizons of the pre-service teachers, but also provides a new dimension and perspective to the general education program that would not exist otherwise. Numerous faculty have commented on the abilities and positive role-modeling that education majors bring to Core discussion groups. This is especially true when the Core students are required to plan and present information to their peers.

The Core Curriculum is an integrated, interdisciplinary program which extends throughout all eight semesters of the undergraduate experience totaling forty-five (45) semester credits. The Core Curriculum complements all academic majors and minors, including professional education, through the four years of the students' academic careers. Faculty from nearly all academic disciplines team-teach in one of the ten segments of the Core Curriculum which has six common goals serving as benchmarks for faculty to reach and as expectations for students to achieve through continuous growth, development, and assessment. The six common goals of the Core curriculum are as follows: 1) to develop cognitive and communication skills; 2) to build a community of seekers after truth; 3) to expand awareness to the many dimensions of reality; 4) to cultivate the integrative habit of mind; 5) to evoke formulation of, enthusiasm for, and commitment to values; and 6) to witness to the specific values of our Judeo-Christian and Humanist traditions in keeping with the College motto of "Religio, Moralitas, Scientia" or "Faith, Morals, and Knowledge."

The Core Curriculum constitutes the first major of each and every student at the College. That means that every graduate has the benefit of a solid background in an integrated liberal arts program as well as in a major field of study. The Core Curriculum is composed of ten segments

evenly distributed over the eight semester career of the learner. Freshmen take Cores 1 and 2 while sophomores are engaged with Cores 3 and 4. At the junior level, Cores 5 and 7 are taken during the first semester while Cores 6 and 8 are offered in the second term. Core 9 and Core 10 are taken in the senior year, first and second semesters respectively. Across all ten segments of the Core Curriculum, the faculty have collegially agreed that students must write between 20 and 25, double spaced, typed pages per semester. The requirement of students writing and orally defending their work before their peers is a second major strand embedded in the Core Curriculum. With this quantity of writing across all eight semesters, the College does not require the normal English Composition I and II courses which are required at most other institutions in the freshman year. Nor does the College require a Fundamentals of Speech course, as all students are required to defend their beliefs and facts in their papers presented before their peers and professors.

Due to its national success and international acclaims, the Core Curriculum has received notice and numerous awards in various publications (Money, Wall Street Journal, Chicago Tribune) and from various funding agencies including the National Endowment for the Humanities and FIPSE. One goal of a recent FIPSE sponsored grant provided the faculty at the College and in the education department the opportunity to examine and analyze possible "interdisciplinary learning connections" between the elementary education program and the Core Curriculum. One result of our analysis was the outright incorporation by the education department, of the six common Core goals, already stated, for the teacher education program as the department began to establish learning connections, between the major, the minor, and the Core Curriculum. Subsequently, the unit added a seventh goal as learning connections were sought and highlighted between the four components of the program. It reads: to demonstrate a

passion for and commitment to teaching. Table I illustrates the Core Curriculum, its various titles, and a brief description of the content of each segment.

Table I: Core Curriculum

Core	Title	Description
1	The Contemporary Situation	A study of the human situation in the twentieth century with its crises and achievements. The course aims at student involvement in the world through reflection and communication. (Freshman)
2	The Modern World	A study of the larger movements of civilization from the seventeenth to the twentieth century with emphasis on contemporary relevance. (Freshman)
3	The Roots of Western Civilization	A study of the Hebrew, Greek and Roman civilizations in their roles as roots of Western Civilization. Core 3 stresses the intellectual, artistic, religious, and social contributions of these civilizations to our modern Western Civilization. (Sophomore)
4	The Christian Impact on Western Civilization	A study of the growth of Western Civilization from the beginning of the Christian era to the emergence of the Modern World. The intellectual, artistic, religious, and social growth of these years is emphasized. (Sophomore)
5/6	Humanity in the Universe	This course, extended through two semesters, studies the emergence of the human species in the course of cosmic, biological and cultural evolution and assesses the theoretical and practical impact of the natural sciences on the human situation. (Junior)
7/8	Intercultural Studies	An examination of civilizations other than our own. By studying other cultures, the student gains a new perspective and insight into the institutions and thought of the Western world. (Junior)
9	Towards a Christian Humanism	This course attempts to point to the possibility of a Christian view of the human person by an examination of the general problems of humanism, religion, Christianity, and Catholicism. It applies psychological, sociological, philosophical, and theological considerations to the material provided by the previous Core experience. (Senior)
10	Christianity and the Human Situation	A seminar course on selected ethical problems of our day in the light of Christian faith and of all the Core experience, especially Core 9. Core 10 is, therefore, a study of the practice of Christian Humanism. Topics might be related to person-oriented concerns, to urgent contemporary issues, or to a student's chosen career. (Senior)

As already stated the Core Curriculum is a program that all undergraduates are required to take. Pre-service teachers along with their peers from biology, music, English, chemistry, etc., share common readings and lectures. Two to three discussions per week allow all students to explore the readings, revisit the lectures, and provide time for students to orally defend their written research papers and manifestos. Pre-service teachers attempt to illustrate what they know

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about their profession to their peers via nine of the ten segments of the general education program known as the Core Curriculum.

Professional Education

It is the contention of the education faculty that graduates of our teacher education program need to be prepared to serve others and society efficiently and effectively in a complex and rapidly changing technological world. Graduates further need to be prepared to teach in urban, suburban, and rural settings composed of individuals who possess a diversity of ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, economic, cultural, and academic backgrounds. Teachers should also be prepared to meet the special needs of all mainstreamed individuals using all possible resources including technological advances especially in the curriculum areas of reading/language arts and mathematics literacy. Accordingly, teachers prepared at Saint Joseph's College are exposed to and collaborate in a spirit of academic freedom found in the four categories of the curriculum. The four categories include the following: 1) general education courses or the Core Curriculum; 2) subject area or specialty courses; 3) professional education courses; and 4) Professional Laboratory Experiences (PLEs) which culminate in the student teaching experience. It is from these four categories that teaching as a profession is developed at Saint Joseph's College. And it is between these four categories that the examination and establishment of interdisciplinary learning connections has been researched and continues to be analyzed and implemented.

The development of the pre-service teacher is based on both content and context knowledge. Content knowledge is that which is discovered and revealed in general education (Core), specialty courses (the major and minor) and in the professional education courses. It includes generalizable theories and major principles and concepts germane to these areas.

Context knowledge is that which is observed, analyzed, and synthesized. It includes the actual on-site experience in a school classroom. In context knowledge the beginning professional participates "in situ." Context knowledge is acquired by participating in the reflective practice of observing and participating in actual field teaching experiences or PLEs.

By integrating content knowledge and context knowledge the entire faculty as well as the education faculty and P/K-12 professional classroom teachers prime and prepare pre-service teachers to reflect upon their application of content and context in order to make sound professional decisions relevant to classroom management and instruction while enhancing the individual learning skills of all learners. Accordingly, the sequence of professional education courses and PLEs makes possible for pre-service teachers a sound knowledge base in psychological, social, cultural, historical, and philosophical foundations of education. Theory is integrated into practice through their involvement with Core, the content subjects, professional education courses, and the context knowledge of classroom observations in early and diverse PLEs. An additional goal of the teacher education program is to demonstrate a passion for and commitment to teaching. This seventh goal includes preparing teachers to be knowledgeable about the learner, about various methods of teaching, about reflecting on their teaching based on their PLEs, and about making responsible and sensible decisions to serve all audiences in the school community within a Christian humanistic framework as Christian Professionals.

Professional Laboratory Experiences

The theory of Posner (1985) has been in use by the education department since 1991-92. He contends that pre-service teachers will be better reflective practitioners when they have early and varied school or PLE experiences that are connected to their professional education courses. He provides a myriad of practical ideas and borrows theories from other practitioners to support

his theory. The unit has adopted Posner's theory and with the assistance of local school corporations, begin placing our pre-service teachers in their first PLE within weeks of their arrival on campus as freshmen, transfer, non-traditional, or second career students. The unit, after much preparation and providing inservice sessions with P/K-12 classroom teachers, building principals, superintendents, college administrators, and faculty from the humanities, arts, and sciences, moved to an all-day PLE beginning in August, 1998. That is all pre-service teachers majoring in early childhood or elementary education spend all day Wednesday in a local school during their freshman and sophomore years. Juniors are in a middle school and high school on Thursdays, while student teaching occurs in either semester of the senior year.

The idea of establishing learning connections between the College's Core Curriculum and the academic major came into existence in the 1992-93 school year when the College was awarded a three year (1993-96) FIPSE grant to study this concept. The goal was to establish cognitive links and relationships between the academic major, elementary education, the PLEs, and the Core Curriculum to increase student academic growth and development. Members of the education department were asked to join the first year or "alpha" team of researchers. Through workshops and specially held education department meetings we examined the sequence and scope of our elementary education courses and PLEs, and analyzed them in relation to the sequence and content of the Core Curriculum. Since members of the education department generally teach one quarter time in the Core Curriculum, we began to see how we could engage our pre-service teachers in the subject content of two and possibly three arenas of their program. One concern was the need to keep faculty from other academic departments who teach pre-service teachers informed and aware of what the education faculty were doing. After a year of

study, 1993-94, we realigned the sequence of our elementary education courses to better match the subject content of the Core Curriculum in order to increase student academic growth and continued development through interdisciplinary learning and teaching. Courses were intentionally categorized as "introductory", "intermediate", and "advanced" which mirrored the sequence pattern of the Core Curriculum. (See attached handout).

The One, Two Punch!

Allow us to cite some examples. Pre-service teachers take Educational Psychology and a PLE along with Core 1 in their first semester on campus. We purposefully embedded some similar concepts and content into the Educational Psychology course that is also presented in Core 1--The Contemporary Situation. For example, in Core 1 students are asked to reflect on their values, how and where those values originated, and attempt to address the question "Who am I" or "Know Thyself." As Core 1 treats the contemporary situation, Educational Psychology asks the pre-service teacher to address the question, "Why Teach?" or "Why am I preparing to be a teacher?" while examining contemporary theories of psychology and how they apply to the field of education, learning, and schooling which are part of America's contemporary landscape. Future plans envision us addressing our P/K-12 colleagues and asking them to provide our pre-service teachers, through the various PLEs these questions and others with the intention of getting the pre-service teacher to reflect on these learning connections while engaged with pupils in the classroom.

In the first four Core segments emphasis is placed on writing expository papers. Faculty of the Education Department, in collaboration with the English Department, teach four language arts/reading courses and two English courses, (Grammar and Expression and Advanced Writing) with interdisciplinary learning connections. The intent of this is to prepare pre-service teachers to

borrow and use ideas, concepts, and theories from the language arts/reading courses and the English courses to the mutual benefit of the other and also to enhance their writing skills while writing papers for their professors in Cores 1 to 4 and in their other courses. PLEs attached to two of the four professional language arts/reading education courses have pre-service teachers working with P/K-12 classroom teachers and their pupils in the curriculum areas of language arts and reading. The intention is to illustrate to the pre-service teachers how the professional education courses, the subject discipline-centered courses, the content of the Core all relate to what they are doing or observing in the P/K-12 classroom. By aligning the four reading/language arts and two English courses within the first four semesters, along with Cores 1, 2, 3, and 4, interdisciplinary learning connections in the form of shared concepts, skills, dispositions, and knowledge bases begin to emerge and are stressed to the pre-service teachers.

In the junior year, pre-service teachers take Cores 5 and 6; Humanity in the Universe I and II. As a result of the FIPSE study the education faculty, in consultation with our science faculty, purposefully moved the two required science courses (generally chemistry and geology) and the science teaching methods course, taught in the education department, into the third year to cultivate interdisciplinary connections within and between the scientific concepts and content presented in Cores 5 and 6, the two science courses, and the science methodology course. Through common lectures, experiments in labs, and writing lab and research papers following the scientific method, our pre-service teachers begin to see the interdisciplinarity of scientific discovery and the importance of science in the elementary and middle school curriculum.

Cores 7 and 8, India and China, and Africa or Latin America are also taken in the junior year. In addition, one of two United States history survey courses must be taken.

Interdisciplinary concepts are fostered between these three courses and the required professional education course titled: Social Studies Methods for the Elementary Teacher. All students, including all pre-service teachers, must have six hours of Intercultural Studies (Core 7 and 8) in order to graduate. This segment of the Core program, in essence, transports students to non-Western societies and traditions in order for them to come to understand and appreciate what these societies have given to humanity.

As students learn the positive characteristics and attributes of these societies, ethnocentric and stereotypical attitudes once held about India, China, Africa, and Latin America and many other diverse groups are shattered. The concepts of peace and justice form major strands in the Intercultural Core (Habrowski 1996, Nichols 1996) allowing students to understand how these societies have added to the sacredness of a better world. It is also during the junior year that all pre-service teachers take the professional education course: Social Foundations of Education. Embedded within this course are strands of multi-cultural awareness and concepts of understanding racial and ethnic diversity of various social and economic backgrounds in the school setting. While enrolled in this course, pre-service teachers have a PLE at a private high school that reaches out to the poor of northwestern Indiana. Our pre-service teachers observe and assist professional 9-12 classroom teachers working with special needs pupils. In specially designed study halls our pre-service teachers work one-on-one with these pupils and assist them with their studies. Once again, interdisciplinary learning connections between the Core Curriculum, the academic major, the professional education courses, and the PLE are being established so that pre-service teachers may see cognitive and affective connections between four content areas while living our theme: Teacher As Christian Professional . In addition, dispositions of caring and compassion which are also embedded within our program are cultivated as pre-

service teachers begin to realize the concept of 'service to others', a central strand in our theme and program.

In the senior year, pre-service teachers take Cores 9 Toward a Christian Humanism and 10 over the two semesters. Core 9, taken in the first semester, attempts to synthesize the materials, skills, and concepts manifested in Cores 1-8 and place them within a Christian humanistic framework. All students, including pre-service teachers, reflectively examine who they are as a Christian and as a humanist. As students read and discuss major traits of those men and women who give their lives for others, Core 9 students reflect on their places in the world and how they believe they may make a positive difference using the value laden concepts of peace, justice, and giving to others. Core 9 also looks ahead to and connects with Core 10, Christianity and the Human Situation or for education majors Christian Education and the Human Situation. As Core 9 asks all students to examine their place in the world, Core 10 directs the students to examine their skills, values, and beliefs in the profession they will move into shortly after graduation. In short, Cores 9 and 10 are composed of a moral component and assist students in their ethical formation.

Our student teachers take Core 10. In a seminar type atmosphere and reading major twentieth century educational philosophers such as Dewey, Counts, Adler, and others, the students develop their own philosophies of education under our guiding theme: Teacher As Christian Professional. Prior to student teaching, each student writes a philosophy of education paper framed by the INTASC standards and what they have learned in Cores 1-8, in their major, and PLEs. Each of the ten standards acts as a component as the writers reflect and recall theories learned and best practices observed and lived. After the twelve to thirteen week student teaching

experience, the student teachers re-read their "before" student teaching papers and for some a minor editing is in order, while others need to rewrite sections or the entire paper based on their student teaching experiences. This becomes their "after" student teaching philosophy paper and for many, the first blueprint of who they are as a teacher moving toward becoming Teacher as Christian Professional.

Conclusion

The idea of interdisciplinary learning connections between four areas of the curriculum at a small, independent, liberal arts college have been examined. We have provided some theoretical foundations and have shown and provided illustrations of how the Core Curriculum, the academic major, professional education courses, and PLEs have been purposefully realigned and connected to enhance optimum student cognitive and moral growth. We have shared how our Core Curriculum, the flagship of the campus, is organized and operates as the keystone supporting the academic major and professional education. Above all, the goals of the Core Curriculum, the College's Mission Statement, the education department's newly adopted mission statement, and our close collaboration with our P/K-12 professional colleagues all assist in providing an integrated program based on the theory of interdisciplinary teaching and learning in informing and forming pre-service teachers in the theme of: Teacher As Christian Professional.

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